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# Analysis of Point of Sale Tobacco Retail Practices in Spokane

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# Analysis Of Point Of Sale Tobacco Retail Practices In Spokane

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## BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) tobacco kills an estimated 6 million people every year
- In 2011 in Washington State, 17.5% adults smoked (7th in the U.S.).
- In 2013 in the U.S., 17.8% of adults smoke cigarettes with over 16 million living with a smoking-related disease and over 480,000 deaths/year.
- 2013 productivity loss in the U.S. exceeded \$150 billion Tobacco is an important public health problem worldwide.
- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2015) around 443,000 people die from direct tobacco use or secondhand smoke, and another 8.6 million face serious health complications from smoking.
- Still 46.6 million adults in the U.S use tobacco products.

## PURPOSE

- The purpose was to explore point of sale tobacco retail practices in Spokane.
- This research study was designed around the United States smoking data that consisted of the price, availability of certain types of cigarette's, cigars, and chewing tobacco.
- We wanted to look at national and state smoking trends to see if we could distinguish any differences between current data and our testing area. We also wanted to know which stores carried what, advertised where, and if stores displayed visible health warnings.

## METHODOLOGY

- Standardized Tobacco Assessment for Retail Setting Survey (STARS) was used as the tobacco survey. This is a standardized survey on how tobacco products are displayed in different retail settings.
- Surveys were conducted between October 29<sup>th</sup> 2015 and November 16<sup>th</sup> 2015.
- Assessments involved researchers visiting 45 stores in south Spokane, identified by the state tobacco license list. The area we surveyed was between Sunset Blvd. - Freya and 57<sup>th</sup>- Riverside Blvd, which is the south side of Spokane City.
- The stores assessed included 29 (64.4%) convenience stores (with or without gas), 5 (11.1%) drug stores/ pharmacies, 10 (22.2%) grocery stores (small markets or supermarkets), and 1 (2.2%) mass merchandiser.
- As anticipated all 45 (100) stores sold tobacco products, with 91.1% (41) also selling alcohol and 28.9% (13) having a pharmacy counter as well. 50.0% (22) of the stores examined accepted WIC and 77.3% (34) accepted SNAP.



## RESULTS

- All 45 (100%) stores also sold menthol cigarettes
- 44 (97.8% ) of premises did not have a tobacco graphic health warning sign.
- 28 (62.2% ) of premises advertised cigarillos/ little cigars for less than \$1.

Which products are advertised outside the store (on windows/ doors, building, sidewalk or elsewhere)?	Percentage of Assessed Premises (Number)
Cigarettes- non-menthol	44.6% (20)
Cigarettes- menthol	20.0% (9)
Cigarillos/ little cigars	20.0% (9)

Tobacco product ad within 3 feet of the floor?	Percentage of Assessed Premises (Number)
Cigarettes- menthol or non menthol	20.0% (9)
Cigarillos/ little cigars	22.2% (10)

## RESULTS

Tobacco product within 12 inches of toys, candy, gum, slushy/ soda machines, or ice cream?	Percentage of Assessed Premises (Number)
Cigarettes- menthol or non menthol	11.1% (5)
Cigarillos/ little cigars	4.4% (2)
Chew, moist or dry, snuff, dip, snus	4.4% (2)
E-Cigarettes	8.9% (4)

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

- In these carcinogenic environments, candies are strategically placed next to tobacco products, easily accessible to kids 3 feet and under.
- 91.1% (41 out of 45) surveyed stores sold alcoholic beverages. From this, it can be stated that sales of alcohol are most likely higher where tobacco is sold.
- Tobacco is widespread in use and the market is catering to needs of the consumers. When alcohol is involved, it does not only increase the chances of abuse and addiction, but it heightens the long term health effects and creates a deadly concoction of substances as well.
- About 20% of places that sold tobacco, also had a pharmacy on site. Ironic?
- Are e-cigarettes a healthy alternative?
- Lack of conclusive research on the effects of e-cigarettes and the harm they cause, gives users of e-cigarettes a false sense of security of using a “supposed” healthy option.

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